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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture – Plus (AVIPA Plus)

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) Plus is an expansion of USAID's successful 2008-2009 emergency voucher program that originally encompassed 18 provinces. The original AVIPA program provided 297,000 vulnerable, but viable farmers, with vouchers entitling them to significant discounts on and access to improved wheat seed and fertilizer in an effort to lower and stabilize food prices in advance of the 2009 elections. During the fall of 2009, AVIPA Plus expanded to provide counter-insurgency stability programming in Hilmand and Kandahar provinces within an agricultural framework. For the 2010/2011 wheat-planting season, AVIPA Plus expanded its certified wheat seed and fertilizer distribution to encompass 31 of 34 provinces (Hilmand, Kunar, and Laghman provinces are supported by other donors), providing vouchers for nearly 260,000 farmers who will pay 35 percent of the cost of these inputs. In spring 2011, AVIPA Plus anticipates selling two-wheeled tractors to 6,000 farmers across 18 north, northeast, west, and central provinces at 35 percent of the cost to encourage adoption of new technology.

AVIPA Plus directly employs more than 1,600 Afghans; capitalizes on its close working relationship with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock's (MAIL) national, provincial, and district authorities; and continues to use private-sector Afghan business distribution networks. In Hilmand and Kandahar provinces, vouchers also support alternatives to poppy (high-value vegetable seeds and machinery to improve farm productivity). Activities also include cash-for-work projects, agricultural in-kind grants, and training. USAID implements AVIPA Plus in close consultation with the provincial governors' office, MAIL, Provincial Reconstruction Team and District Support Team representatives (civilian and military), district development assemblies, and tribal leaders.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- **Agricultural inputs:** Provide subsidized high-value vegetable, melon, and spice seeds (Hilmand and Kandahar provinces only), certified wheat seed, and other agricultural inputs to farmers through an equitable cost-share voucher system
- **Labor intensive projects:** Offer temporary employment and income to local laborers, particularly young men, through short-term public works projects (Hilmand and Kandahar provinces only)
- **Grants:** Award small grants to agribusinesses and MAIL-registered farmer cooperatives in support of the agricultural economy (Hilmand and Kandahar provinces only)
- **Agricultural training:** Provide targeted training that includes new management practices, production technologies, farm machine operation and repair, marketing strategies, as well as a radio training program to voucher recipients

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Distributed more than one million agriculture voucher packages to farmers throughout 32 provinces (297,000 in FY 2009; 490,000 in FY 2010; and 250,000 FY 2011)
- Distributed 441 small grants totaling more than \$19 million benefiting nearly 60,000 farmers
- Completed more than 900 labor intensive community projects, providing quick employment opportunities for approximately 128,000 young men
- Provided various modules of training for improved agricultural techniques to more than 440,000 farmers